and said: "Although it would seem very reprehensible to my Aunt Anne, we are dining alone."

Luella's heart gave a leap for joy as he went on: "My secretary's wife is unfortunately away, but he had arranged for his sister-in-law, who is older and married to the son of a bishop, to come and be your chaperon." The way he said it made it sound so funny that Luella laughed. "I am sure she will prove very effective," the Duke said, "but as she has to attend a church meeting, she cannot join us until after dinner."

"I am sure your Aunt will be delighted that I am to be so well looked after," Luella said demurely. They drank a glass of champagne before dinner was announced.

Luella found herself in a most attractive dining-room. It was painted in the pale green which she knew was a favourite colour of Robert Adam. In the alcoves there were statues of Greek gods skilfully lit from behind. "This is the loveliest room I have ever seen!" Luella said to the Duke.

"That is what I thought myself when I first came here," the Duke said, "and I am very fortunate in knowing it is now mine."

The way he spoke made Luella know that it meant a great deal to him. It also made her aware once again of his importance. She could understand how his Aunt, as well as his other relatives, wanted him to marry somebody whose blood was as 'blue' as his.

"I must enjoy his company while I can," she told herself, "for once all this is settled, I suppose I shall never see him again." It hurt her to know that he

would pass out of her life with the same speed that he had come into it.

As they were being served the Duke said: "I have been thinking. It is strange that your father, considering how well he wrote, has published only one book."

"He started to write when he was young," Luella answered, "having left Oxford with a first class degree in History." She saw the Duke was interested and went on: "He wrote articles for the Royal Geographical Society, using a number of different names. It was only recently that he started using his own."

She thought the Duke was going to ask the reason for that and said quickly: "The Royal Geographical Society were delighted with the articles he wrote about different parts of the world. They not only paid him well, but also kept begging him for more."

The Duke gave an exclamation. "Surely you realise what that means?"

"What does it mean?" Luella enquired.

"It means that you have at least two further books to go to the publishers."

Luella stared at him. "I never . . thought of . . that!"

"I have read articles in the Geographical Magazine," the Duke said, "and I can imagine nothing more attractive to the public than if your father's articles were put together, given a good title and published as a book."

Luella clasped her hands together. "That is clever of you!" she exclaimed. "It was . . stupid of me not to . . think of it."

"You have the articles?" the Duke enquired.